

ENGAGING GOSPEL DOCTRINE (EPISODE 197)

LESSON 24

“Give Us Strength According to Our Faith ... in Christ”

Hook	This is such a fitting final lesson for our four year cycle, as it deals with terrible, almost impossible problems
Manual Goal	To help class members recognize the importance of honoring their foreordained roles, callings, and priesthood responsibilities and to help them understand that following the counsel of prophets helps us enter into the rest of the Lord.
EGD Goal	To inspire class members to live up to their potential and handle tragedy in caring, responsible ways.

Just wanted to thank you and let you know how your lessons have helped myself and my class. I'd become a big fan of your podcast a year ago - I loved your generous approach to the gospel. My journey over the last 3 years had taken me thru many podcasts and finally connected with a few friends in Austin... then Denver that were helping me finally feel happy about my faith in a way I really needed. When we moved to a small town here in Utah last year I was excited to be back home but I was sad that I would most likely have to shelf these type of relationships where I was able to trade insights with folks that helped me see the gospel in a new light. I resigned myself to living with my podcasts and just kind of letting these thoughts live in my brain. We moved to a very small town. These are hard working good people who are mainly farmers - not a place I expected to really have much open mindedness. I had just got out of a bishopric so was also now hanging out with the high priests - I mostly just kept quiet. But then I got called as the gospel doctrine teacher. I decided I was going to approach this class as an opportunity to finally opening up about my posture towards this gospel. It would be the first time I tried to articulate with a larger group how I had come to see the gospel: Thru the eyes of folks like Leonard Arington, Richard Bushman, Adam Miller, Terry and Fiona Givens, and Jared Anderson. The first week was really scary to me. However, a wonderful moment happened after class when I was surrounded by all the people I thought would be irritated by this approach of looking at the BoM thru new eyes and seeing the narratives flowing thru these complex and perhaps flawed characters. Your lessons have awakened a hunger in our little class - discussions are being had, we push back at each other and leave things open to other ways of looking at things. This is perhaps a meandering way of saying thank you so much - but I just wanted to let you know that your work is very meaningful and is making an impact in people lives over here. Look forward to seeing what you do next.

I. Sunday School

- a. Framing (don't let this reading let you off easy)
- b. Two minute take home
 - i. Central theme: structuring your lives so that you can remain humble and do good (13:28)
 1. Agency (Predestination, Foreordination, Response)
 2. Attitude (Ammonihahites vs. Zeezrom)
 - ii. Bearing the unbearable
 1. In scripture (that is how it can really impact us and hopefully change us)
 2. In your own life

3. In others' lives

- c. Scripture commentary
 - d. Lesson
 - i. Alma's final testimony to Ammonihah (vulnerability, pleading)
 - ii. Learning from the Ammonihahites—mindsets of damnation and salvation (damnation is needing to be right at all costs, refusing correction).
 - iii. Allowing scripture to be difficult
 - iv. Sitting with the unbearable in your own life
 - v. Helping others cope with the unbearable (finding meaning in tragedy is a sacred, personal process)
 - vi. Predestination, Foreordination, and doing our part
 - vii. "on the same standing" and accumulated advantage (13:5)
 - viii. Theodicy
 - ix. Concluding thoughts on the podcast
- II. Scripture Study
- III. Study Notes
- a. Suffering of women and children in the world today
 - b. Theodicy down the rabbit hole
 - i. Everything is fated and works out the way it needs to for some mysterious purpose (maximum comfort, but not very satisfying theologically)
 - ii. Everything mostly works out the way God wants it, with minimal adjustments for agency etc.
 - iii. God is limited by agency and other factors, but orchestrates everything so it works out for the best
 - iv. God is strongly limited, but if we live the principles of the gospel, things can work out for our good (this is my personal belief)
 - v. There is no intrinsic meaning but the meaning we make ourselves. We as humans are both breakable and resilient (this is demonstrably true in important ways)
 - c. Agency once again (Predestination)